TAPE NO. 12

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INTERVIEWER

PLACE Zaca Lake

DATE Nov. 10, 1979

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Homesteader's Day Program, Nov. 10, 1979 - Zaca Lake
Lecturer: Dr. Travis Hudson. Subject: Chumash of Zaca Lake

My name is Travis Hudson, Curator of Anthropalology at the Santa Barbara Natural History Museum and my area of study is the Chumash Indians. I have been working in this area for seven years. I was invited to come up here and give a little talk on the Indians. So what I would like to do is aquaint you with the Indian people and how they lived in this area and something about their customs, their culture and and references to the lake itself. First thing I want you to do is, say "oh, oh" real fast. Oh, oh, did you feel a little catch in your throat between those oh,oh's? That is called a guteral stop. And it is a sound in Chumash. The name of the lake is T'OH, that means "water" and is the Inezano name for the lake. Its easier to say Zaca, isn't it?

Let me tell you somthing about the Chumash. In terms of California there were approximatly 150,000 to 300,000 Indian people in this state at the time of contact. There were more Indians in California than any other place in North America in terms of population density. It is quite surprising because these people lived off of hunting and gathering and were not agriculturalists. Had they become agriculturists, they would not have been able to support so many people on this land. Now, it was a very, very rich environment if you knew how to procure food from it. To procure the food around the Chumash required two kinds of technology. A technology to collect the food, and a technology to render that food etible. These people probably came into this area about 10,000 year ago. Although we do not know for sure. These earlist times that we have in this area was called "Oak Grove." There is an oak grove site located along the shore of the lake but I am sworn to secrecy not to tell the location. These sites range from about 3,000BC to 7,000 BC. The Oak Grove people lived in this area when the climate was wetter, more moist, much like Monterey. They were eating alot of wild seeds, finding small seeds that they processed. One of the tools that they used to process was a large stone morter or matate, and a small hand stone called a mano that was brought back and forth across the larger stone to grind the

seeds into a flour or meal. They would mix that flour with water an make cakes out of it or they would boil it in baskets and make a gruel out of it like soup. They also hunted very small animals,some deer, rabbits, and things like this using nets. There was no bow and arrows at that time. The bow and arrow was invented in North Africa about 20,000 year ago,and spred around the world and reached into North America and this area arriving here about 1,000 AD. So it was a very, very late invention. The Oak Grove people were using a device called an Addel,Addel. It is an Aztec word meaning spear thrower. You have a stick about 4 feet long that has little finger holes in it. Your finger goes in to the stick and you put a dart with feathers on it and a sharp point and they would stick this arrow into the stick, run like a javelin thrower, bring this stick back and throw it forward. The stick stays in the handle but the dart or arrow is projected forward. They could actually kill a large animal, for instance a mammoth. Very powerful weapon at close rance. In terms of efficiency in exploiting these ? we don't know a whole lot, we do know they lived in small groups called Bands. It is an anthropological term and means the number of people in these communities were around 20 to 100 and they would seasonally move around within the enirоment in early Spring, they would be eating roots and new shoots of plants. Toward Summer they had grass seeds. In the Fall, different kinds of berries and herbs. And they would store the excess, grinding for the Winter. And it goes full circle next Spring. Winter was a very hard time for them. Their dwellings were an earth-shaped structure like a pit house, you dig a pit not very deep, two or three feet and run some beams up for the ceiling and cover the roof with grasses(Tules) then soil on top of that. Having a fire inside made it comfortable. The family size was probably five or six individuals, father, mother, children and there were extended families with grandmother too. People that were related probably formed these bands. In other words people related on the father's side were the women marrying into the band and the daughters marrying out of the band. It would have been that way. Around 2,000 BC there were alot of changes taking place in the Santa Barbara area. We don't know

why these changes were taking place. Sea level was tapering off because the Ice Age is ending. The sea level was rising and is still at the same level. This may have had some impact on these people in fishing but what is happening along the coastal area the ocean fronts are becoming increasingly dependent on sea foods. They had very developed water craft. What they were doing on the coast effected the people in the Zaca Lake area. Because they conducted trade between the groups. Trade was a very important thing. You have people who manufacture items, they trade for food and for other items from these other areas. Around 2,000 BC another culture comes in, probably the Hunting People. They hunted large animals, deer, elk. Plants were still collected but now there is more specialty. One very important food item enters the picture, the Acorn. Why weren't they eating acorns earlier? Probably because they had not figured out how to leach out the tanic acid to make the acorn etible. It is poisonous right from the acorn. The leaching process is, collect the acorn, crack and dry the meat, meat is processed by grinding into meal, that flour still has the tanic acid in it, and has to be leached. Near water, they made a depression in the ground, lined the depression with leaves, and take the flour and pour into the depression, and baskets of water is poured over the flour in the hole, with this soil, there was good drainage, and after two or three times they tasted it and if there was still the bitternes they continued with the leaching until the taste was good. Then the flour was cooked in baskets. A water-proof basket with hot rocks put into it, this boils the water and flour and cooks the food, sometimes with meat and bulbs. This was prepared three times a day by the women. Alot of their activity was cooking and gathering. Ground squirrels were also eatten by roasting. These hunting people were more sophisticated because they had perfected the leaching of the acorn and because they were now hunting. This meant more food, more leisure time. With more time, they made more elaborate items. Beads, shell money. We have good indication that these people were interacting with other people in the area. And all over California. Feathers were traded hundreds of miles away. Medicines were used for curing ailments and one was called Yep, acquired near Porterville Calif, also called Alum.

The Yocut Indians got the Yep from a mining source and they traded it to the neighboring group, who in turn traded to others and it would get to this area and to the coast. By the time the Yep got to the coast from Porterville, it had become very expensive. By way of return, an otter pelt might be going the other way in trade. All sorts of trading, feathers, shells, medicine, technology. We don't know much about their ceremonies but we suspect that they had a stratified culture. There were three classes: rich,middle class, and the poor. All paid taxes in seeds or other items. The poor people were supported by these taxes. Around 1,000 AD this reaches a climax. This took many, many forms in terms of rituals and cultural ways. One is wooden bowls. In this area these inland people were skilled at wood-carving. They would take an oak, bay, or sycamore, find a burl, cut it out and then go to work burning it to hollow it into a bowl shape. A perfectly rounded bowl. It often looked as thought it had been turned on a lathe. This type of quality of workmanship is reflected in other areas set these Indian people apart from others of other areas. I was surprised when I visited the Midu people. They were talking about baskets, baskets that had to be patched. What you normally would do would be to alter that worn basket into some other use such as a big cooking basket would become a hopper to go with a morter. That way you would use the basket for two different functions but you would find it useful, but you would never think of putting a new bottom on that worn basket. It would be undignified to these people. So I was very surprised that this Midu lady was patching this basket. The Chumash took great pride in their workmanship. 1,000 AD we see an increasing amount of specialization in that these people, that were once working as a unit in hunting and collecting, are now becoming functional families. For example, one family would make wooden bowls, one family, baskets, etc. Then they would trade. Also the bow making families that would receive back from the trade of that bow, part of the kill, from the man who got the bow. This developed into crafts guilds.

The thing that managed to control all this was a cult called ANTAP. The Antap cult was a secret society and it was composed of the wealthy or elite people, only they could belong. Early in life, boys and girls were initiated into this cult to keep the

organization going. They were taught a special esoteric language. These people had access to secret supernatural powers. Now the way that power worked was through a dream helper. The Indian concept about natural things were not natural, everything was supernatural. Various degrees of power made the world what is was to them. For example, that tree has a spirit or power, that bird, that log,etc. And what man was to all of this was another being with power and he had to interact with the other things to balance everything, beings in the sky, on this earth, and below. Now the people in this cult had access to vast quantities of power and they could call upon various beings to do things. One being you are looking at now, Sun, was the most important being in the upper world. Sun had the ability to share. There would be people such as the tribel chief of these communities and he would have Sun as a dream helper. By drinking toloache or Jimpson Weed, they would have visions to get a spiritual relationship with Sun. They would call Sun to help with certain problems. People had contact with Bird, Eagle, Coyote, etc. Mostly the Shaman would be able to do this. The average person's spirit would be a lesser animal or bird. The elite had more that one spirit helper. The more power you had from the spirits, the more powerful you were within the band. The power was for good and for evil. This Antap cult was composed of all the elite in the community. If there were 100 people in the band, there would be 12 in thecult. There would be a number of small villages in the area and they would be grouped into a province. This privince had a common dialect. It was administered by representatives from each of these little villages. The Antap group would serve in a group of Antaps who would have a regional chief or WOT. At the time of contact in this community there were several provinces that corresponded with each dialect. We don't know all the provinces that were in this area but one of them was ruled out of a village called Sosomat nu, which is on Alamo Pintado Creek. As you leave Zaca Lake and go out Highway 154 and cross Alamo Pintado Rd. north of that was a great village that rulled this area here. Most of the area villages of the Santa Ynez Valley were probably ruled by the Wot of Sosomat nu. The language of these people was orgainzed by dialects. The Santa Ynez Valley area was Inesano Chumash. Only because later the area was near the Mission Santa Ines.

This is our name for them because we did not know what they called themselves. There is a general tendency for the Chumash to name people after the village. At the time of contact these provinces were going through change because these Indians who controlled suddenly found their power pulled away from them. It was very much like a great cultural shock as if you were to be visited by something from another workd. They realized that there was more out there and their power was weakened more and more by Europeans. Their philosophy did not allow them to accept Europeans. Because they were at the center of their universe and they were their own masters. So when the Spanish came in all this fell apart. No longer could they see themselves as the center but now they were only a part. They found out there were others with power. So they flocked to the Spanish in order to learn what power the Spanish had and how they could also get some. You can imagine if you translate power into material objects how tramatic it would be. The Spanish brought in glass, in forms of beads. Quarts crystal was one trade item that was traded all over this area and was associated with rain-making. Now everyone could have a crystal not just the Shaman or Wot. Some of these beads from the Spanish liked like crystal and now everyone could have one. This upset the power structure and economic system. No longer could the Indians rely on other Indians to make the system work. As it turned out bringing the Chumash into the church taught them agriculture instead of hunting and gathering, a loss of knowledge of when to collect foods and what to look for and the technology of all this was then lost. The Chumash became more and more dependant on the Spanish, another system. Around 1840 when the missions were secularized what we see going on at these former provinces, like the one here at Zaca Lake turned into Assistencias or little ranches run by the missions. What the missions did was to have the Indian Alcaldes or leaders who would be selected by the Padres, they would go out into the back country to take care of the cattle and sheep. They had their little families and these communities were of about 15 people. Many of these communities vanished over time. One of these Assistencias associated with Mission Santa Ines that still remains is Zanja de Cota Reservation, about 3 miles east of the mission. At this location

the chief of the village of Sokomoknu was Marcelino, his Christian name. He lived on that land until his death and his decendants still live there today. In fact you did see some of them perform today at the Homesteaders Day celebration. Juanito Centeno. She is a decendant of that chiefly line.

One story I may tell you about the lake and this was collected by John Peabody Harrington when he interviewed some of the Chumash of this area in 1918, " There was a village at Zaca Lake and there was one individual in the village who started making fun of Thunder." Remember I told you that the Chumash considered all things supernatural, that everything had a soul. To these people you did not make fun of Thunder or any other thing. "Thunder decided to come down and punish this individual and approached the person while all the other residents of the village fled. Thunder got even with the person by sitting right here at the lake site and made the lake from where he sat."